

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 LONDON 08087 01 OF 02 221740Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
/066 W

-----079694 221812Z /45

R 221718Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6373
INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMCONSUL BELFAST

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 08087

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT PINS UK EI
SUBJECT: NORTHERN IRELAND'S POLITICAL FUTURE:
INTERIM ASSEMBLY RELAUNCHED AND REJECTED

REF: (A) 77 DUBLIN 2656, (B) 77 DUBLIN 3809

THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE WAS DRAFTED BY CONGEN BELFAST
MAY 17.

BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

1. SUMMARY. FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH THE IRISH
FOREIGN MINISTER IN DUBLIN, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND ROY MASON REINTRODUCED HIS SCHEME FOR
A LIMITED DEVOLUTION OF AUTHORITY TO AN INTERIM ASSEMBLY
IN NI. THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES IMMEDIATELY FOUND DISCUS-
SION OF NO INTEREST. PROBABLY FEW IN HIS NI AUDIENCE
LIKED ALL THAT MASON SAID, BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING FOR
ALL BUT THE EXTREMISTS. MASON HAD KIND WORDS FOR THE
REPUBLIC, BUT WE FOUND MOST STRIKING HIS ASSERTION THAT
AGREEMENT ON NI'S FUTURE MUST COME "WITHOUT PRESSURE OR
COERCION"--I.E., NO BRITISH OR OUTSIDE PRESSURE ON THE
UNIONISTS BY MEANS OF A DECLARATION OF INTENT TO WITH-
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LONDON 08087 01 OF 02 221740Z

DRAW FROM NI, OR WITHDRAWING THE COMMITMENT TO ABIDE BY
THE MAJORITY WILL ON KEEPING NI IN THE UK. END SUMMARY
END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

2. MASON SPEECH: AT QUESTION TIME IN THE COMMONS
MAY 11, MASON TOLD NI'S OFFICIAL UNIONISTS THEY WOULD

NOT GET THE DEVOLUTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY THEY HAVE BEEN PLUMPING FOR. AS THOUGH TO RUB IN HIS NEGATIVE, AND TO CHALLENGE THE UNIONISTS ON THEIR VOTES AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT EARLIER IN THE WEEK ON THE FINANCE BILL, MASON USED A SPEECH IN LONDONDERRY THE NEXT DAY TO RELAUNCH HIS SCHEME OF LAST AUTUMN FOR AN INTERIM DEVOLUTION OF AUTHORITY TO A PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY. (THE FIVE POINTS HE OUTLINED WERE THE SAME--REFTELS.) MASON PICKED UP A THEME FROM HIS MAY 5 MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER O'KENNEDY: THERE ARE TWO DIFFERING TRADITIONS IN NI, AND THE VIEWS OF MAJORITY AND MINORITY MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AND RESPECTED. THEREFORE, LET NI POLITICIANS ESTABLISH THE SORT OF TRUST NECESSARY TO BRIDGETHEIR LONG TERM DIFFERENCES BY WORKING TOGETHER IN A "PARTNERSHIP GOVERNMENT" HAVING REAL RESPONSIBILITY. HE ALSO SPOKE OF HIS ENCOURAGEMENT BY THE DUBLIN TALKS, AND OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS' "100 PERCENT" COMMITMENT TO DEFEAT VIOLENT ORGANIZATIONS.

3. NO PRESSURE OR COERCION: MASON MADE TWO OTHER BASIC POLITICAL POINTS. MOST STRIKINGLY, IT IS "SIMPLY NOT BEING REALISTIC" TO DISREGARD THE FEELINGS OF ONE OR ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE COMMUNITY IN SEEKING A RETURN TO PURE MAJORITY RULE IN NI (UNIONISTS/LOYALISTS), OR A UNITED IRELAND (REPUBLICANS/SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOR PARTY). MASON CITED THE "FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE" LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 LONDON 08087 01 OF 02 221740Z

THAT ANY SOLUTION MUST HAVE THE AGREEMENT OF NI'S MAJORITY AND MINORITY, AND THE AGREEMENT "MUST COME WILLINGLY AND WITHOUT PRESSURE OR COERCION." ANY SOLUTION IMPOSED AGAINST THE WILL OF EITHER SIDE "COULD RESULT IN LONG TERM SECURITY PROBLEMS EVEN MORE SERIOUS" THAN AT PRESENT

4. SECONDLY, THE PROVISIONAL IRA IS TRYING TO BRING ABOUT "THEIR OWN PECULIAR BRAND OF UNITY," AND ALSO TO DESTROY THE GOVERNMENTS OF SOUTH AND NORTH ALIKE AND REPLACE THEM WITH THEIR OWN SYSTEM. PIRA HAS NO POPULAR DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT, AND ITS SYSTEM IS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO THE VAST MAJORITY OF PEOPLE.

5. REACTION: AS COULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED, OFFICIAL UNIONIST LEADER HARRY WEST AND SDLP LEADER GERRY FITT BOTH TURNED DOWN THE THOUGHT OF NEW DISCUSSIONS ON MASON'S PLAN: THEY SAID HE HAD OFFERED NOTHING NEW, AND THERE WAS NO USE TRYING AGAIN ON THE OLD BASIS. ONLY ALLIANCE LEADER OLIVER NAPIER WELCOMED MASON'S INITIATIVE: HE SAID THE CLIMATE WAS RIPE AND MASON'S PROPOSALS WERE A REASONABLE BASIS FOR DISCUSSION. END UNCLASSIED

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 LONDON 08087 02 OF 02 221739Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
/066 W

-----079686 221813Z /45

R 221718Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6374
INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMCONSUL BELFAST

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 08087

BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

6. COMMENT: WE DO NOT KNOW WHY MASON SO POINTEDLY RE-
LAUNCHED HIS SCHEME FOR AN INTERIM ASSEMBLY WHEN HE MUST
HAVE KNOWN THE PRINCIPAL PARTIES WOULD NOT JOIN HIM.
HIS ADVISERS HAD BEEN PREPARING FOR QUIET SOUNDINGS, AND
HE RAN THE RISK OF PROVOKING AN ABSOLUTE REJECTION OF
HIS PLAN'S PRINCIPLES. WE SPECULATE:

(1) HE WANTED THE UNIONISTS TO KNOW THERE WAS NO
CHANCE OF STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NI OR OF
ESCAPING "PARTNERSHIP" WITH THE MINORITY, AND THAT THEIR
EFFORTS TO USE THEIR VOTES IN COMMONS AS A LEVER TO
PRESSURE WOULD NOT WORK. (EMBASSY COMMENT: THE UNION-
ISTS MAY FIND OTHER FIELDS MORE FERTILE. CONSERVATIVE
NI SPOKESMAN AIREY NEAVE RECENTLY TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE
CONSIDERED POWER SHARING IN NI "IMPRACTICAL" AND THAT HE
FAVORED THE EXTENSION OF GOVERNMENTAL POWERS TO NON-
EXECUTIVE LOCAL COUNCILS. NEAVE HAS IN THE PAST URGED A
CONSERVATIVE RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE UNIONISTS, AND HIS
CURRENT VIEWS ON NI GOVERNMENT ARE QUITE SIMILAR TO THOSE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LONDON 08087 02 OF 02 221739Z

VOICES BY UNIONIST LEADERS IN PARLIAMENT. THERE IS, HOWEVER, SOME QUESTION AS TO HOW FAR NEAVE CAN GO TOWARD ACCOMODATING THE UNIONISTS WITHOUT MEETING RESISTANCE FROM OTHER INFLUENTIAL TORIES SUCH AS WHITELAW.)

(2) HE MAY HAVE FELT UNDER PRESSURE TO BREAK THE POLITICAL VACUUM, AND DEMONSTRATED THAT--SHORT OF MAKING A BASIC POLICY CHANGE--THERE IS NOTHING TO BE DONE IN THIS PREELECTORAL ATMOSPHERE. WE NOTE ON THE LATTER POINT THAT LAST WEEK ONE OF MASON'S ADVISERS CAUTIONED A VISITING DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIAL THAT PRESSURE TO DO SOMETHING NOW WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE.

7. MASON'S UNWILLINGNESS TO SEEK A LONG TERM SOLUTION BY PRESSURING OR COERCING EITHER SIDE HERE IS UNDERSTANDABLE. HE SEEMS TO BE SAYING THAT MANY SOUTHERNERS AND OTHERS UNDERESTIMATE THE DETERMINATION OF THE NI MAJORITY TO MAINTAIN THEIR WAY OF LIFE, AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO USE TO THAT END A DEGREE OF VIOLENCE HMG--OR THE REPUBLIC--MIGHT FIND DIFFICULT TO CONFRONT.

STREATOR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LONDON08087
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780215-0907
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780534/aaaabccm.tel
Line Count: 194
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3ebc8a99-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 DUBLIN 2656, 77 DUBLIN 3809
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2617647
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NORTHERN IRELAND'S POLITICAL FUTURE: INTERIM ASSEMBLY RELAUNCHED AND REJECTED
TAGS: PINT, PINS, UK, EI
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3ebc8a99-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014